

**Diocese of Carlisle Board of Education**

**Heads Huddle Notes**

**Tuesday 6th October: Open catch up**

**Reflection:**

Thank you for shouldering the burden, through the hard times as well as the good. Thank you for responding to your calling and for your determination to see this through.

‘For such a time as this’

*Esther 4:14*

**Feedback from Headteachers: themes of the week**

**Harvest:** it was lovely to hear that Harvest services have been and are still taking place this year albeit in very different ways to usual. Your creativity to make services work by using technology to share things with one another and with families is inspiring. Please do share your harvest news and pictures.

**Recurring zoom meetings:** the Heads Huddle invite link is now recurring – you can click on the same link in Morven’s email of 28th September any week. Here it is again for ease of reference:

[**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85053449378?pwd=dDBUa3NKdXozVHJoeWxnUUNab2FKQT09**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85053449378?pwd=dDBUa3NKdXozVHJoeWxnUUNab2FKQT09)

**Remembering what we’re in this job for:** we returned to the theme of Headteacher wellbeing, the toll that the current circumstances are taking and how to cope in the long term as things show no sign of improving any time soon. The long hours and number of meetings people are dealing with are tiring. Parents are increasingly nervous about a second wave, have heard stories of local confirmed cases and are needing lots of reassurance. The full extent of children’s needs is now becoming apparent – the elation of being back at school and with friends is wearing off and they are beginning to make disclosures and reveal the amount of emotional support they need. How then do we find time for ourselves?



Remember, if you are overwhelmed and can no longer carry on, the pupils will suffer far more in the long term than they will if you cut out a few things and find ways to look after yourself.

Consider looking for some time for yourself during the school day – does your school do the ‘daily mile’? Do you get out and run with children, getting some fresh air and exercise away from your screen, office or classroom?

Where do you find support? Is it through your local cluster of Headteachers? Do you have an understanding governor or minister you can turn to? Perhaps you have a close friend, partner or family member who is your sounding board? It is important that you have at least one person who you feel able to speak to about the issues you are facing and the emotional toll they take.

Please remember that Vanessa (07584 684306) and Charlotte (07917 993659) are only a phone call away and will be happy to help in any way we can, even if that is just listening and understanding.

**Remote learning:** we discussed the difference between remote learning during school closure (where we could plan for which pupils were in school/hub and those at home and there was a balance of staff planning for pupils in school and planning for pupils at home) compared to this time where we cannot predict when an individual pupil, a bubble or even the whole school may need to learn remotely with no or very little notice. Headteachers are concerned about the stress on staff who are balancing the needs of the pupils in front of them at the same time as trying to think about and plan for providing remote learning. We also discussed the pressure of having to learn to use new platforms/ways of working being difficult when time is short and the demands are high.

**Pupils with special and additional needs:** we shared the frustration of Headteachers chasing referrals and diagnoses which are slow at the best of times and with the current backlog are worse than ever. Length of time spent completing paperwork for referrals is also another source of stress for Headteachers.

**Information sharing from the Diocese: remote learning**

We are very conscious that Headteachers will have seen guidance for remote learning which gives the impression that an online learning platform is what is expected. However, we also know that this will not work for all settings – your area may have very poor connectivity, your families may not have access to devices, your families may not be comfortable (or able or have time to) support your pupils with online learning. Remember that **you** know your school, your pupils and their families best. If you decide to use an alternative, as always, make sure you can justify your decision – ensure governors are on board and document your decision making and rationale. For example, conduct a parent survey and, if a very small percentage are able to access online learning, it clearly would not be the best platform to use.

If you are concerned about delivering remote learning and wish to discuss this further, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.